



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
May 27, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via WebEx

October 2019-September 2020

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	8	0
April Kirk, Vice Chair	P	6	3
Jonathan Bennett	A	2	5
Elizabeth Cupido	P	8	0
Christina Disbrow	P	5	3
Mary Kinirons	P	7	1
Richard Morris	P	5	3
Christi Rice	P	8	0
Terra Sickler	P	6	2
Marisol Simon	P	8	0
Dana Somerstein	P	7	1

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator
Jeff Modarelli, City Clerk
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of May 14, 2020, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Szugajew called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Szugajew advised that there has been a request for the Board to hear a walk-on Item from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce. He advised that this would be an informational item only.

Motion made by Ms. Somerstein, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to hear from the Chamber. [The **motion** was approved by consent.]

Dan Lindblade, President and CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, recalled that when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, it became clear to the Chamber and its directors that a significant economic downturn would be part of the crisis. Nearly 200,000 individuals in Florida have lost their jobs and small businesses are failing in large numbers.

Mr. Lindblade explained that he reached out to Fort Lauderdale's City Manager with a request to consider a three-phase recovery plan, which would be spearheaded by the Chamber. The Chamber can provide a library of technical resources that can be used by small businesses. They are using artificial intelligence to capture additional information that can help small businesses navigate through the pandemic. The information can be accessed using multiple platforms, and ultimately an individual representative of the Chamber will be available to provide assistance.

The second phase of the Chamber's plan will begin the first week of June 2020 in conjunction with colleagues at the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and the Broward County Council of Chambers. This phase includes driving business to local entities in Fort Lauderdale throughout the City Commission districts.

Mr. Lindblade characterized the third phase of the program as "boot camp for small businesses." This is similar to the City's Business Engagement, Assistance, and Mentorship (BEAMs) program, although it will be managed by the Chamber and its curriculum designed by Broward College. The program is intended to support the business community in Broward County and in Fort Lauderdale in particular. Mr. Lindblade concluded that he is not requesting funds for the program.

Ms. Somerstein asked if there is a contact person at the Chamber to whom businesses interested in participating could reach out. Mr. Lindblade advised that this will be Joe Havercheck from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, who is also executive director of the Alliance's Six Pillars program.

III. CDBG APPLICATION PRESENTATION – PUBLIC SERVICES

- **SoFIA (Impact Broward) / Peter Kaldes**
- **Broward Partnership for the Homeless / Frances Esposito**
- **Turnstone Development / William Schneider**
- **Women in Distress of Broward County / Mary Riedel**
- **Sunshine for All / Mauricio Hanono**

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Administrator Simone Flores shared a spreadsheet reflecting the City's funding recommendations for each agency.

Vice Chair Kirk commented that she was under the impression the Board's scores were not yet finalized so they could discuss scoring further at today's meeting. It was also noted that the Board had been awaiting further documentation to be provided by Sunshine for All. Senior Administrative Assistant Eveline Dsouza replied that she had sent this agency's documentation to the full Board but had made no changes to the scoring sheet since the previous meeting.

Ms. Flores advised that the score sheet was sent to the Board members with the intent that they would discuss their scores and any other issues before making a decision on funding. Ms. Somerstein suggested that the Board review the spreadsheet and briefly discuss whether or not any member would like to amend their scores for any of the Applicants.

Motion made by Ms. Somerstein, seconded by Vice Chair Kirk, to go through the Board and take three to five minutes to confirm that there are no changes to scores. [The **motion** was approved by consent.]

Vice Chair Kirk made the following changes to her scores:

- Turnstone Development: change Evaluation score to 12 and Management to 6
- Sunshine for All: change Evaluation score to 6 and Financial to 0

The other Board members did not make changes to their scores. It was noted that all agencies' scores must exceed 70% in order to receive CDBG funding.

The Board reviewed the revised spreadsheet, with Ms. Flores explaining that the agencies' requested amounts were multiplied against their scoring percentage. It was noted that the results were very close to the amount of CDBG funding available.

Vice Chair Kirk expressed concern with funding Sunshine for All at \$42,000 based on their application, stating that she did not feel they had done sufficient work within their community to use this amount of funding. She cited concerns with their providing documentation on time. While there is a significant need in the Fort Lauderdale community for the services they have provided in other cities, she was not certain that they could expand their services to another community on a large scale, as they had not yet identified the local partner agencies with which they would be working. She recommended that Sunshine for All be funded at a lesser amount than suggested, and that the removed funds be provided to agencies that received higher scores.

Chair Szugajew advised that while he shared a number of Vice Chair Kirk's concerns, he felt Sunshine for All should receive some portion of funding, as this is their first year applying for CDBG dollars and the Board wants to encourage new applicants.

Ms. Cupido pointed out that the agency has requested approximately \$1600 per client served. Ms. Disbrow added that Sunshine for All provides only one hot meal per day, five days per week, while other services may provide up to three meals. Vice Chair Kirk noted that some agencies, such as Women in Distress of Broward County, only received scores lower than 100% because they have been funded with CDBG dollars in the past and did not receive points available to a first-time applicant.

Motion made by Vice Chair Kirk, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to fund Women in Distress for the full requested amount of \$37,500.

The Board members discussed other applicants as well, with Ms. Disbrow pointing out that Turnstone Development's application did not identify local partnerships or matching funds, and that the agency duplicates some of its services. Ms. Simon expressed concern with funding any agency at 100% of its request, noting that the City's recommended funding for Women in Distress is 95% of their request.

Vice Chair Kirk **withdrew** her **motion** for the sake of additional discussion.

Ms. Cupido asked why the City's recommendations were for partial rather than full funding. Chair Szugajew replied that the percentage is based on the agencies' scores. Ms. Rice commented that this seems to penalize the highest-scoring agencies, which are Women in Distress, SoFIA, and the Broward Partnership for the Homeless, for not requesting a larger funding amount. Ms. Somerstein also spoke in favor of funding the top three agencies at their full requested amounts. Chair Szugajew also noted that the three highest-scoring agencies consistently outperform other applicants.

Motion made by Vice Chair Kirk, seconded by Ms. Cupido, to fund Women in Distress, SoFIA, [and] Broward Partnership for the Homeless at full funding of \$37,500, \$50,000, and \$50,000, which is a grand total of \$137,500. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 7-1 (Ms. Simon dissenting). (Ms. Kinirons and Mr. Morris did not vote.)

The Board continued with discussion of the applications from Sunshine for All and Turnstone Development, with Chair Szugajew noting that the remaining CDBG funds yet to be allocated total \$60,608. It was clarified that it is possible for the Board to leave a portion of this funding on the table without allocating it to an agency.

Ms. Cupido proposed dividing the remaining funds evenly between Turnstone Development and Sunshine for All. The members discussed the number of clients each agency proposed to serve with their requested funds. Ms. Disbrow expressed concern with the request from Turnstone Development, noting that helping their clients achieve self-sufficiency means the clients will be able to pay a higher amount in rent. She recommended providing \$25,000 to Sunshine for All and \$0 to Turnstone Development, adding that Turnstone has not improved their program or application since the previous year.

Ms. Cupido asked if not using some of the funds might endanger the City's chances of receiving the same amount in future allocations. Ms. Williams replied that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allows but does not require the City to use up to 50% of its total allocation for Public Services. Funds may also be used toward other CDBG-eligible activities that may not fall under the CSB's purview.

Motion made by Ms. Disbrow, seconded by Vice Chair Kirk, to fund Sunshine for All for half of their requested amount of \$50,000 and give them \$25,000. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 8-0. (Ms. Kinirons and Mr. Morris did not vote.)

Ms. Somerstein asked if any remaining funds would remain available for the Board to allocate to future projects at a later time. Ms. Williams confirmed that this would be possible as long as the funds have not been allocated to other activities. Chair Szugajew noted that the City Commission may also wish to use these funds elsewhere for a program that is outside the Board's control.

Motion made by Ms. Cupido, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, that they don't fund [Turnstone Development]. In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 3-5 (Chair Szugajew, Ms. Rice, Ms. Sickler, Ms. Simon, and Ms. Somerstein dissenting). (Ms. Kinirons and Mr. Morris did not vote.)

Ms. Somerstein advised that if Turnstone is given an allocation, the Board will be able to monitor their use of it and determine if they are a good candidate for additional funding in the future.

Motion made by Vice Chair Kirk, seconded by Ms. Somerstein, to fund Turnstone at \$25,000. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-2 (Ms. Cupido and Ms. Disbrow dissenting). (Ms. Kinirons and Mr. Morris did not vote.)

IV. CBDO APPLICATION PRESENTATION

- **Mt. Bethel Human Services / Dr. Rosby Glover**
- **H.O.M.E.S., Inc. / Linda Taylor, Katherine Barry**

Chair Szugajew advised that the City's funding recommendations for the Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) total \$263 more than what is available.

Motion made by Ms. Somerstein, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to fund at essentially the City's recommendations [and] shave off a few dollars to make it work. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 8-0. (Ms. Kinirons and Mr. Morris did not vote.)

Ms. Williams pointed out that the Board may use some of the unspent Public Services funds to make up the \$263 shortfall for CBDOs. Vice Chair Kirk advised that if the funding

amounts are rounded to \$124,000 and \$71,000 for the two CBDO agencies, this would reduce the funding amount to an even \$195,000. It was clarified that this had been the intent of the **motion**.

V. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Vice Chair Kirk stated that the Community Services Board seems to regularly be “left behind by the City” in comparison to other boards, and that Staff is not supported in the amount of work it does with respect to the CSB. She emphasized that these remarks were in no way intended to be critical of the Staff members who spend considerable time and energy in working with the CSB.

Vice Chair Kirk continued that other City advisory bodies have support and participation from the City Attorney’s Office, City Clerk’s Office, Budget Office, and City Manager’s Office, while the CSB does not receive this level of support. She pointed out that today’s meeting was not listed on the City’s calendar.

Vice Chair Kirk concluded that the CSB has allocated millions of dollars in funding over the years to assist the Fort Lauderdale community. She requested that the City do better on behalf of its residents and provide CSB Staff with greater support so the Board can continue to support the work of nonprofit entities.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Schneider of Turnstone Development thanked the Board for their funding allocations and promised that Turnstone will do better regarding its applications in the future. Jose Bogaert of Sunshine for All also thanked the Board for their funding opportunity, and emphasized that during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the community’s senior citizens will need to be fed. He noted that the City of Miami had awarded the organization additional funds in recognition of this need, as many community centers have closed during the pandemic. He felt leaving funds on the table could result in allowing some vulnerable residents to go hungry.

VII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was noted that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 8, 2020, and will focus on discussing Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA). Ms. Williams will email the Board members their scoring sheets from the previous year for review, and outcomes from the agencies will be presented. If a conflict exists with another advisory body meeting, the Board will be informed of this in advance so they can select another date.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]